

**Security Council**

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Report of the Secretary-General on the status and progress of the negotiations on Western Sahara**I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1783 (2007), by which the Council called upon the parties to continue to show political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to engage in substantive negotiations, thus ensuring implementation of resolution 1754 (2007) and the success of negotiations. The Council also called upon the parties to continue negotiations under my auspices, without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and developments of the past months, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in that respect. In the same resolution, the Council requested me to provide a report by 31 January 2008 on the status and progress of the negotiations under my auspices, and expressed its intention to meet to receive and discuss the report. The present report covers developments since the issuance of my report dated 19 October 2007 (S/2007/619).

II. Status and progress of the negotiations

2. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1783 (2007), in letters dated 4 December 2007, I invited the parties, Morocco and the Frente Polisario para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario), to send delegations to a meeting to be facilitated by my Personal Envoy, Peter van Walsum, at the Greentree Estate in Manhasset, New York, from 7 to 9 January 2008. In my letters, it was specified that the discussions would be private and that the purpose of the meeting was to continue the process of negotiations started with the meetings held in Manhasset on 18 and 19 June 2007 and on 10 and 11 August 2007. In similar letters, I invited Algeria and Mauritania to attend the Manhasset meeting as neighbouring countries.

3. The meeting was held at the Greentree Estate from 7 to 9 January 2008, as planned. The parties held separate meetings with my Personal Envoy, as well as several sessions of face-to-face discussions. Representatives of the neighbouring



countries, Algeria and Mauritania, were present at the opening and closing sessions and were consulted separately during the meeting.

4. In opening the meeting, my Personal Envoy underlined that the Security Council expected the parties to negotiate in good faith and show political will in order to enter into substantive discussions and ensure the success of the negotiations. During the opening session and subsequent discussions, the parties reiterated their commitment to the process of negotiations and to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007). Nevertheless, their stated positions remained far apart on ways to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. As a result, although the parties dynamically interacted with each other, there was hardly any exchange that could be characterized as negotiations.

5. During the meeting, the parties engaged in an extensive exchange of views with regard to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007). In addition, as already announced in my report to the Security Council of 19 October 2007 (S/2007/619), the matter of confidence-building measures was included on the agenda in order to obtain greater clarity as to the positions of the parties on existing or additional measures, as well as on the appropriate forum for discussing such measures. The parties also participated in discussions on thematic subjects related to administration: competences and organs. Although the parties adequately replied to queries raised by my Personal Envoy, seeking clarifications on their respective proposals relative to those thematic subjects, and in a certain measure interacted with each other, they did not examine specific elements included in each other's proposals.

6. With regard to the way forward in the process, I am pleased to inform the Council that, during the meeting, the parties welcomed the intention of my Personal Envoy to visit the region shortly afterwards for in-depth consultations, and agreed to convene again from 11 to 13 March 2008 at the Greentree Estate, New York, for a fourth round of talks.

7. At the end of the meeting, the parties agreed to the communiqué of my Personal Envoy, contained in the annex to the present report, in which they reiterated their commitment to show political will and negotiate in good faith, as called for by the Security Council, and agreed on the need to move the process into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations.

Annex

[Original: English and French]

Communiqué of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara (in agreement with the parties), Greentree Estate, 9 January 2008

Representatives of Morocco and the Frente Polisario met under United Nations auspices at the Greentree Estate on 8 and 9 January 2008, in continuation of their discussions aimed at finding a mutually acceptable solution to the impasse in the conflict on Western Sahara. As was the case in the previous rounds of talks, representatives of the neighbouring countries, Algeria and Mauritania, were also present at the opening and closing sessions and were consulted separately during the talks.

The discussions focused on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007). During the two days of discussions, the parties continued to express strong differences on the fundamental questions at stake. At the same time, the parties reiterated their commitment to show political will and negotiate in good faith, as called for by the Security Council, and agreed on the need to move the process into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations.

In addition, the parties discussed but did not agree on confidence-building measures. They also had preliminary discussions on thematic subjects such as administration, competences and organs.

With regard to the next steps in the process, the parties agreed to convene from 11 to 13 March 2008 at the Greentree Estate, New York, for a fourth round of talks. In order to help prepare the groundwork for those discussions, the parties welcomed my intention to visit the region shortly for in-depth consultations.